

NOVEMBER 28, 1961

MR. DULLES

Mr. President, distinguished guests, and members of the Central Intelligence Agency, I am deeply touched and deeply grateful for the words of the President and for the honor he has bestowed upon me. It is almost eleven years to a day that I came down to Washington at the bequest, I might almost say the order of Walter Bedel Smith, a very great general and a very great man and my predecessor. I was then practicing the law. Bedell called me up and said "You have written a report on how this Agency should be run, you and a few others and your had better come down here." Mr. President that was eleven years ago and I am still here. It was in part the fascination of the work, the opportunities for service, and the indulgence and kindness of three presidents, including President Kennedy that have kept me on. The Agency was then young, in its infancy. It is still fairly young, but Mr. President I feel that I can assure you that we have here today a corps of well trained men and women devoted to their country, to their service, and Mr. President to you as their Commander-in-Chief. I feel proud of them and I have been proud to have served with them, and to visit them in all the corners of the earth where they are working in the national interest. They are now looking forward to serving their new chief, John McCone, my old friend. To the Agency personnel here a word of thanks. We have known good times and bad and as the President has just said our successes are unsung and our failures are advertised.

I commend you to your new chief and I can do that with assurance and I have commended him to you. Mr. President as I close my work here I turn over my duties to Mr. McCone. I want to thank you for your constant support, help and encouragement for your understanding of the needs and the problems, and the possibilities of this Agency. I know I am leaving my work in good hands. I believe the future of this Agency and service to the country is one that is assured. And as I receive this medal I receive it Mr. President not really in a personal capacity, but I receive it for all of you because I know that in giving it to me he is giving it in a sense to all of the personnel of the Agency. My thanks Mr. President.